

Excerpts mainly
from the Chinese People's Republic
press and radio

July 20, 1966

The "Educational Revolution"
in the Universities

On June 13, the CCP Central Committee announced its intention to reform the college entrance examination and to postpone the 1966 college enrolment for six months. In the words of Chou En-lai, the Chinese are at present "carrying out a great educational revolution to wipe out thoroughly the influences of the bourgeois educational system". It is clear that the Chinese are desperate to ensure that future graduates from schools and colleges are "red as well as expert" and will not doubt the wisdom of the Party, as apparently do many young people educated under the present system.

The educational revolution is well under way in the Universities and colleges and is already being extended to include middle schools.

EDUCATIONAL REFORM

The Enrolment System:

Peking radio of June 17, 1966 made the following announcement:-

"On June 13, 1966, the CCP Central Committee and the State Council issued a notice. In order to carry out the cultural revolution thoroughly, and completely reform the educational system, they have decided to reform the entrance examination methods of higher education institutes and to postpone the 1966 student enrolment programme for half a year".

On June 18, 1966, the People's Daily explained that the revolution in the field of education had only just begun and that there were still "many stubborn bourgeois strongholds" which had not yet been breached:

"If the entrance examination of enrolling new students went ahead as usual just now, this would undoubtedly bring the great proletarian cultural revolution in the field of education to a stop halfway, cripple the revolutionary enthusiasm of the left students and encourage the counter-revolutionary arrogance of the bourgeois right".

In future, according to the People's Daily:

"... a new method of enrolment, a combination of recommendation and selection, in which proletarian politics are right to the fore and the massive line is followed, will go into effect".

It added: "The same method will also be used in enrolling students of senior-middle schools".

Following the announcement of the CCP decision, the press and radio published numerous reports of support for the proposed changes.

Proposals for reform

On July 12, the People's Daily published a letter from seven humanities students at the People's University of China which stated that under the present system, education lasted too long and that it "violates the thought of Mao Tse-tung". Some "authorities", it said, had aimed to "make our youth become the tools for the restoration of capitalism". The old system laid too much emphasis on books and with six years in primary school, and five at University, students were 25 before graduating. A work-study system should be extended together with a shortening of courses so that teachers could handle many more students. The students then proposed five measures for humanities students:

- (i) That students who had completed two years at University should, when the cultural revolution had ended, graduate immediately so that they could join in the three great revolutionary campaigns - class struggle, production struggle and scientific experiment.
- (ii) That humanities faculties must use Mao's works as text books and class struggle must be the main subject.
- (iii) That the length of humanities courses should be set at one, two or three years (instead of five) depending on the needs of the State, and that students must spend a certain amount of time each year doing farm work or military training.
- (iv) That more use should be made of private reading and discussion in groups, guided by teachers.
- (v) That Universities should enrol students who have "stepped themselves in the three big revolutionary campaigns and have a progressive political outlook".

The way in which this letter was presented in the People's Daily can only mean that the proposals have been accepted.

A similar technique was used to herald the earlier announcement that University enrolment should be postponed for six months. On June 6, 1966, pupils of the Peking No. 1 Middle School for Girls sent a message to Chairman Mao strongly urging the reform of the college entrance examination system and proposing that the Party in future select children of the proletariat to study at higher education Institutes. This proposal was followed by the official announcement on June 13 that such decision had been made.

Chou En-lai on educational reform:

Speaking at a rally in Tirana on June 27, 1966, during his visit to Albania, Chou En-lai said, according to NCNA June 28:-

"We are carrying out in our country a great educational revolution to wipe out thoroughly the influences of the bourgeois educational system and to change completely the situation in which the bourgeois intellectuals dominate our schools. We are making a start by changing the old system of college entrance exams, and will take further steps to carry out an overall and complete reform of our educational system.... Schooling should be made shorter. The part-work, part-study and part-farming, part-study schools will be popularized gradually.... The cause of education in our country must be guided by Mao Tse-tung's thought, give prominence to proletarian politics, keep to the class line of the proletariat, combine education with productive labour and create the conditions for the elimination of the differences between mental and physical labour."

This is the official Chinese view at a time when the cultural revolution is leading to disruption of academic life and a general upheaval in the Universities and higher education institutes in China.

Reasons for Reform

Unemployed educated youths:

For some years the problem of so-called "social" or "street youths" has indicated shortcomings in the Chinese educational system. "Social youths" are mainly young people in urban areas who have failed to gain entrance into higher education institutes and middle schools, and who are either unemployed or underemployed. Recently, their number has apparently been supplemented by unemployed graduates.

These youths are unable to find suitable urban employment and are either unsuited or unwilling to go to the countryside where there is employment.

Many of these young people, dissatisfied and bored, use their spare time roaming around in gangs, some becoming hooligans and thieves.

In November, 1965, for example, the deputy-mayor of Shanghai told a foreign journalist that some of the cities youngsters were potential "Ah Feis" (teddy boys), and were in need of further education.

In order to eliminate these shortcomings, the government has taken steps to provide spare-time educational facilities; to ensure that these facilities fit the youths for the jobs available and to channel them into these jobs. Their plans have included the organization of activists among "social youth", whose job it is to persuade them to move to the countryside. In Shanghai particularly, this work has been underway for some time and many youths have been mobilized to go to Sinkiang. Shanghai radio on May 3, 1966, said that in the past few years 70,000 educated youths, including "social youths", had gone to Sinkiang. From Canton they are sent to Hainan. Canton radio on April 25, 1966, announced that in 1966, up to April 24, 2,600 "social youths" had applied to go to Hainan.

Another step taken by the government to utilize the potential labour force of the "social youth" is the inauguration of labour reserve training centres where the youths are taught a trade or craft thus equipping them for later employment. Canton radio on December 16, 1965, announced that over 12,000 "social youths" in Canton alone now attend these courses. In Shanghai, 80% of the "social youths" have joined classes while 10,000 of them have been found provisional jobs in factories, and 14,000 in state farms, parks and seed nurseries.

The People's Daily April 4, 1966, stated that urban youths without higher education and without jobs are now being "guided" to rural villages in a "planned way" in Changchun. The method includes farm-study schools with establishments in the city and in the country; the city schools train the "social youths" who are then sent to the country where they continue to study while doing the job for which they have been trained.

Work-study education

The lack of full-time educational facilities especially in the field of higher education, has also been emphasized by the increase, since the end of 1964, in the number of work-study and farm-study schools and colleges. As well as providing education cheaply and being the only way to "universalize education", they also have the advantage, according to the Chinese, of producing literate workers who have none of the traditional Chinese intellectuals' reluctance for labour.

The Campaign:

In the light of the situation as revealed by the government's attempts at improvement, it is possible to assume that the present campaign for educational reform is a result of the Chinese realization

that the present educational system does not fulfill their purpose, and that instead of creating "revolutionary heirs and successors", it is producing a generation of dissatisfied and disillusioned youths who provide a breeding ground for bourgeois thoughts and attitudes. Consequently the government is attempting to rid the Universities and higher education institutes of all bourgeois and feudal influence, thus destroying the traditional belief in the importance of scholarship and implementing the communist theory that a man must be "red as well as expert".

Undoubtedly, however, the campaign activities will not be confined to higher education. There is evidence that already they are being extended to include the middle schools. The People's Daily on June 18, 1966, stated that the new method of enrolment used in institutes of higher education "will also be used in enrolling students of senior middle schools". The same paper also referred to the education campaign being carried out in middle schools, while Chou-En-lai, in his speech in Tirana, said that "in all types of schools there must be a thorough implementation of the educational policy initiated by Comrade Mao Tse-tung."

The Cultural Revolution in the Universities

It has been a noticeable feature of the "cultural revolution" that academics are one of the main groups under criticism. It is clear that every means has been used to humiliate and in some cases even terrorize those being attacked. The methods include the use of "big character" posters, in which anyone can condemn his colleague, friend or teacher if he suspects him of the least shred of reactionary or bourgeois behaviour.

According to some sources, Peking University professors accused of "anti-Party activities" have had to walk about wearing placards on their chests and backs proclaiming "I am an anti-Party intellectual." Some have also had windows in their homes smashed and furniture and furnishings damaged. They frequently have to face crowds of their accusers.

It has also been reported that two professors at Peking University have been driven to suicide.

Background History:

The following brief accounts of the establishment and development of some of the Universities involved in the campaign may be found useful for details revealed in them, such as the cause for Mao's antipathy towards academics, the appointment as President of Nanking University in 1963 of Kuang Ya-ming, who has now been deposed, and the relatively small proportion of graduates emerging each year compared to the size of China's population.

Peking University

History: The original Peking University was founded in 1898 and became firmly established in 1902 as "the Imperial University of Peking". In 1916, Tsai Yuan-pei, then chancellor, began to reform the university's four faculties, letters, science, law and engineering, on American lines, and also made the university co-educational. His academic reputation attracted many of the best scholars of the time. The University became a centre for liberals and radicals. During this period, in 1918, Mao Tse-tung, frustrated in his desire to study at Peking University, was offered a minor position in the University library. It was his duty to fetch newspapers requested by students and to return them to the files afterwards. This was one of the most menial jobs in the University and he received the same salary as the coolies. Mao later revealed that the offhanded and contemptuous treatment he received from the professors made him detest them. He stated:

"I knew then that there was something wrong. For hundreds of years the scholars had moved away from the people and I began to dream of a time when the scholars would teach the coolies."

In 1919 the 5,000 Peking University students led the "May 4 movement" against the confirmation of humiliating demands on China by the Versailles conference. According to Mao Tse-tung the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had its beginnings with this movement. Shortly after the incident, Tsai Yuan pei, who had been involved, resigned as chancellor for fear of assassination by the police.

Throughout the twenties the students at Peking continued to lead riots and demonstrations but these activities were largely curtailed when, in 1928, the Kuomintang took over Peking. However, under the guidance of Hu Shih, (now described by the communists as 'a reactionary, bourgeois writer',) the University continued to develop its scholarship, particularly in the application of Western methods to the study of Chinese culture.

In 1937, the Japanese occupation of Peking meant the closure of the University and the majority of teachers and students fled the city. When the Kuomintang again took over in 1945 the University reopened and hostility between students and the regime increased until in 1949 the communists seized power.

The new regime began drastic reorganization of the University in 1952. It was moved from its original site in the city to the site of the old American Missionary University of Yenching, near the summer palace. The science and arts faculties of Peking University were amalgamated with those of Yenching and Tsinghua Universities to form a single entity. The law and engineering faculties were moved to other universities.

In keeping with tradition, the Peking University students and teachers took the lead in the "Hundred Flowers" movement in 1956-57, when the government, having invited criticism, was astounded at the extent of the response. Scores of students were consequently sent to the countryside to "transform their thought", while others continued their study under humiliating conditions.

The government's policy since then has been to increase the proportion of students with worker-peasant background in the student body on the assumption that they are less likely than others to be corrupted by bourgeois thought. This, together with the introduction of work-study methods involving students in short spells of agricultural work near the University or, alternatively, months at a time in the country - resulted in a general lowering of academic standards. This was aggravated by the large amount of time spent in compulsory political activities.

At present the University has 17 departments and over 10,000 students. No degrees are given, instead students receive a certificate of graduation on successful completion of their courses.

Peking Television University

History: The Peking Television University is a spare-time University and was the first of its type in China. It was founded in March, 1960, with three departments and an initial enrolment of over 6,000.

NCNA on August 17, 1965, announced that by then the University had five departments: Chinese, mathematics, physics, chemistry and foreign languages, and that faculty members and staff workers totalled 110 and the total number of trainees was more than 12,600. The trainees are widely scattered in government organs, factories, mines, schools and armed forces units. The Peking Daily of September 17, 1964, claimed that 80% of the students passed their exams.

The University held its first graduation ceremony on September 21, 1964, when 202 students graduated. On August 17, 1965, NCMA announced that 4,318 students graduated at the second ceremony.

Nanking University

History: Nanking University was founded as a normal school in 1902 and became the "Central University" in 1928. Since 1950 it has been known as "Nanking University". Until 1952, it had seven colleges and 41 departments, then it was reorganized to contain 10 departments and 30 faculties, with 4,800 students. By 1960 the enrolment figure had risen to 6,000. In May, 1963, Kuang-Ya-ming was approved as President of the University.

Wuhan University

History: The NCNA on August 31, 1963, announced that in that "jubilee year" of Wuhan University, there had been a record enrolment of 1,000. This brought the total number of students past and present, from 1949 to 1963 to 8,200, the actual student body being approximately four and a half thousand.

In 1958, the University of Wuhan "fervently responded to the call of Chairman Mao" and "carried out a big revolution of education". The University set up a factory and the students and teachers went to the country and into the factories to engage in productive labour. This "spirit of 1958" has, according to an article broadcast on Wuhan radio on June 19, 1966, remained within the University, waging ceaseless struggle with the counter-attacks of the bourgeois authorities and has now, "in the storm of the great proletarian cultural revolution", managed to overthrow the "enemy".

Hopei University

History: Hopei University was inaugurated on May 15, 1958, according to an NCNA report of the same date with 150 students, this number to be increased later. Courses were offered in socialism, natural sciences, pedology and entomology. The number of courses was also to be increased later.

By October, 1965, according to Kwangming Daily there was also a math department and by 1966, a history department.

Chiao Tung University

History: Chiao Tung University is 70 years old and was originally situated in Shanghai. In 1956, it was announced that the University would gradually be moved from Shanghai to Sian. On October 19, 1959, NCNA announced that the Shanghai and Sian sections of the University would be operating independently from the September term.

In 1961, according to NCNA, November 28, 1961, the University had over 7,000 students and 1,400 faculty members.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
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Peking pushes education reform

By Paul Wohl

Written for The Christian Science Monitor

The political purge sweeping through Communist China is also leading to a radical educational reform.

The new China apparently is to belong to the children of poor peasants and workers for whom Chairman Mao Tse-tung's teachings are to be the beginning and the end of knowledge.

The nature of this educational reform, first announced on June 13, now can be inferred from a letter which seven students have addressed to Chairman Mao and to the party's Central Committee. Presumably written to order, it was published July 12 in the People's Daily.

The gist of the letter is that henceforth students with "progressive political ideas" should be admitted to universities without having completed their high-school studies.

Prerequisite for admission to higher studies henceforth is to be participation in one of the following three "great revolutionary movements":

1. "The class struggle," which under present circumstances seems to mean first of all struggle against "revisionists" or advocates of an understanding with the Soviet Union;
2. "The production battle," meaning manual work in factories, in mines, or railroads or farms;
3. "Scientific and other technical experiences." Service in the armed forces comes under this heading.

The immediate effect of the new measures will be drastically to lower the level of university graduates. Instead of an intellectual elite, China is to have a mass army of partially educated but proficient technicians, a foreman's intelligencia, wholly devoted to the regime and imbued with hatred for its enemies.

One purpose of the new educational system is to dominate "revisionists," a term which in Communist China has become equivalent to "class enemy" and to all those who believe in seeking a common ground with Moscow.

Communists of Soviet persuasion are well aware of the anti-Soviet character of the present phase of the "cultural revolution" and of the educational reform being introduced in its wake. This may explain why European newspapers have begun to point to the pro-Soviet stand of various victims

of the purge. This kind of probing into political motives of a purge is something entirely new in Communist reporting.

East Europeans also point to the negative effect of the educational reform as far as the proficiency of the new Chinese generation is concerned.

Authorities accused

The seven Chinese student revolutionists, who claim to be victims of the old system, have accused certain "authorities," presumably university presidents and faculties, of three shortcomings: of having rejected the teachings of Chairman Mao, of having thwarted the rise of a second revolutionary generation, and of having created an abyss between the proletariat and the academic youth.

The seven stalwarts of Maoism suggest that "once the great cultural revolution will have been completed, all students with a minimum of two years of general educational studies will plunge full-time into the three great revolutionary movements in order to unite and blend for a long period with the workers, peasants, and soldiers."

"The works of Mao Tse-tung are to become the main subject in the study program, together with lessons to be drawn from Mao's work with regard to the class struggle"—and, presumably, the struggle against pro-Soviet revisionists.

Discussions stressed

"According to Chairman Mao's instructions and to the requirements of the state, the duration of general studies will be limited to one, two, or three years and part of the time will be devoted to industrial and farm work, to military instruction and to the study of the class struggle" (once again against the revisionists), the letter goes on.

"Methodically, emphasis should be on individual study followed by discussions during which the professors will give the right directives without cramming [book] knowledge into the students' heads.

"The universities henceforth should recruit their students from among those young people who have been tested in the three great revolutionary movements, who have progressive political ideas and a certain cultural level. In order to give leeway to the elite elements of the workers and peas-

ants masses and to demobilized soldiers it no longer should be necessary to recruit university students from among high-school graduates."

Contrary to the teachings of Mao Tse-tung, the old system, according to the seven student stalwarts, "gave priority to book learning, turned students and professors away from political reality, enclosed them in metaphysics, scholastics, and dogmatism."

With the students spending their most valuable time in school, where they are lodged and fed, "is it possible that these children of poor peasants would not forget the past?" the seven students ask. They also suggest shorter classes, which would allow a professor to train twice as many students as before.

Soviet effort recalled

Some of the proposals set forth by the seven students remind one of the quickie courses in the workers and peasants faculties of the first years of the Soviet revolution. The proposals also contain elements of former Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev's school reform of 1958 under which students were to devote part of their time to manual work in various fields of production.

East Europeans with long-time experience in Communist China believe the big issues raised by the reform are political rather than educational.

Why should this reform be necessary, these East European former students at Chinese Communist universities ask, since similar measures were introduced between 1955 and 1957? At that time, too, the study of Mao Tse-tung's thought was made the main subject of studies. Young workers, peasants, and demobilized soldiers were admitted to universities without high-school diplomas.

What seems to have happened is that the old Chinese cultural traditions proved to be stronger than this earlier revolutionary shake-up of the educational system.

Endorsement of this letter by the People's Daily seems to indicate that the seven students' proposals represent the new line which the present leadership intends to put over.

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